William Jennings Bryan Visits the Wild Moro Country

Singapore, Jan. 22, 1906.—The term Moro is used to describe the Mohammedan Filipino and includes a number of tribes occupying the large island of Mindanao and the smaller islands adjacent to it and those of the Sulu archipelago.

The northeast corner of Mindanao is separated from the island of Leyte by the Surigao strait, and that part of Mindanao has a considerable sprinkling of Christian Filipinos, but both that island and the Sulus can be considered Moro country. The Americans recognize the difference between the two groups of islands and administer government according to different plans. Civil government has been established in the northern islands, and except where ladronism prevails, law and order reign. There are in some places, as in northern Luzon, wild tribes in the mountains, but these are so few in number and so different from the civilized Filipinos that they do not enter into the solution of the Philippine problem.

In Mindanao, however, and the other Moro provinces, warlike tribes have been in control. They have furnished a large number of pirates and have frequently invaded the northern island, carrying back Filipino slaves. They never acknowledged the authority of Spain and succeeded in keeping most of the islands in the southern group free from Spanish control. Our country probably exercises authority over more Moro territory than Spain ever did, and yet our authority is limited and we employ the military form of government rather than the civil.

In our tour of the islands we crossed over the narrow part of Mindanao, went up the Cotabato valley and called upon the sultan of Sulu at his home near Maibun, on the island of Sulu.

We landed at Camp Overton, a military post on Iligan bay, on the north coast of Mindanao, and immediately began the ascent to Camp Kiethley, eighteen miles in the interior. A military road has been constructed between these two camps, following for the greater part of the way the Spanish trail. Owing to the heavy rainfall and the luxuriant growth of vegetation it is difficult to keep a road in repair, and not far from the coast we passed a large number of prisoners who were engaged in straightening and improving it. About three miles from the coast we made a short detour in order to see the famous Argus falls, and they are well worth seeing. The Argus river, which at this point is a large stream, falls 220 feet and rushes by a tortuous route through the narrow walls of a gorge. The falls are not only picturesque, but they suggest the possibility of future use. It has been calculated that 100,000-horsepower is here going to waste which might be put to use. The military authorities have been trying to secure an appropriation for an electric railroad from Camp Overton to Camp Kiethley, with the intention of obtaining power from the falls, but this would utilize only a small fraction of the energy which the Argus possesses.

Two miles farther up the road we turned aside to see the rapids of the same river, and here made our first acquaintance with the Moros. We found a dozen of them under a rude shed of palm leaves, preparing the evening meal. The most conspicuous dish, at least the dish that attracted our attention, was a skillet full of grasshoppers being done to a neat brown over a slow fire. While we were watching them, two half bare children returned from the chase with a large supply of fresh grasshoppers strung upon grass. The Moros have a most repulsive habit of dying the teeth black, the enamel being first scraped off. Add to this the red tinge left on the lips by the chewing of the betel nut and the mouth is anything but beautiful.

The clothing of the Moro is scanty and of a cheap quality. The men when at work often wear nothing but a breech cloth. When dressed up they wear very tight-fitting trousers of gay color, a tight-fitting waist and a turban completes their company dress. A garment much worn by men and women is the sarong, which is a piece of cloth sewed together like a roller towel and folded about the body. The men, no matter what else they wear or fail to wear, have a scarf wound around the waist, in which they carry a knife, of which there are several varieties, the bolo, the barong and the kris being the most popular. The Moros above mentioned consented to having a snapshot taken, and their spokesman informed us in broken English that he had visited the St. Louis exposition. Captain McCoy, one of General Woods' staff, who accompanied us as far as Zamboanga, explained to us that a number of Moros were sent to St. Louis as an experiment and that they had returned very much impressed by what they saw in the United States.

As we proceeded on the road to Kiethley we passed the spot where a sergeant was cut to pieces by the Moros three weeks before. While all the Moros carry knives and are expert in their use, they set a high estimate upon a gun, and the hapless traveler who carries one of these envied weapons is apt to be waylaid, if alone, and lose his life as a penalty for his rashness. With this incident fresh in his memory, Colonel Steever of Camp Overton furnished us with a mounted guard. During the first part of the ride we passed through a forest in which there were many large trees, some of them with fantastic trunks, others festooned with vines and all surrounded by a thick undergrowth which furnishes an admirable cover for reptiles, beasts or hostile natives. (A boa constrictor thirty-six feet long was recently killed not far from the road on which we traveled.)

I have referred to the killing of the sergeant and mentioned the reason sometimes given. It is to be regretted that we occasionally lose men for reasons that reflect upon us. Governor Devore, whose jurisdiction extends over a part of Mindanao, officially reports the killing of one soldier in a quarrel which grew out of an attempt by the soldier to secure native wine without paying for it.

The latter part of the ride was through a series of small hills covered with cogon grass. The soil looks as though it might be very fertile, and we passed one little ranch where an American had set out some hemp plants, but there was little evidence of cultivation along the line.

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Camp Kiethley is about 2,300 feet above the sea, on a hill which bears the same name, and commands a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The ocean can be seen to the north, and to the south a magnificent mountain lake stretches away for twenty miles. A regiment under the command of Colonel Williams is stationed here, and this is considered one of the most healthful situations in the Philippine islands. The American officers insist that Mindanao has a better climate than Luzon, and some of them are enthusiastic about the possibility of drawing American settlers to the island. General Wood has given much attention to the products and climatic conditions, and has encouraged the coming of Americans to Mindanao. Some 200 of these have settled about Davao bay in the southeastern part of the island and are cultivatnng hemp. I found, however, that most of the members of the military circle were counting the months intervening before the time of their return to the states.

The ride across Lake Lanao took us in sight of some hostile country, whose inhabitants still refuse to acknowledge allegiance to the United States. Some of the cottas, or forts, from which Moros had been driven within a few months were pointed out to us. Governor Devore is building a model town on the shores of the lake and hopes to convince the natives of the friendly intertions of our country.

Camp Vickars is only a few miles south of the lake and near the summit of the divide. The elevation here is 2,900 feet and the site for the camp is well chosen. It is about twenty-two miles from this point down to Malabang, the seaport on Llana bay, and Captain Foster, who is in command at Camp Vickars, furnished us with a mounted escort. The ride down to the sea was even more enjoyable than the trip to Camp Kiethley, the road leading through forests more dense and fcliage more varied. The journey was enlivened by the sight of a number of monkeys sporting in the trees and by the discordant notes of the horn-bill. There is a waterfall on the south side of the range, also, clearly half way down from the summit, which, while it does not compare with the Argus falls, could be used for the development of several thousand horse power.

The camp at Malabang, now under command of Colonel Varnum, has a splendid water supply derived from several large springs, but the harbor is so poor that the government is preparing to remove the camp to Parang, about twenty miles farther south, where there is an excellent harbor.

At Malabang we took our boat again, it having gone around the island while we crossed over, and proceeded to Cotabata, near the mouth of the Rio Grande river. Acting Governor Boyd met us here with a river steamer and took us to his headquarters, about thirty-five miles farther up the river. We had a double purpose in making this trip, first, to see one of the most fertile valleys on the island and, second, to pay our respects to Datu Piang, a friendly Moro of considerable influence among the natives. The Rio Grande is a crooked stream, wending its way peacefully through the high grass, the monotony being broken now and then by cocoanut groves, rice fields, mango trees, banana plants and hemp. While there was no such systematic cultivation here as in the northern islands, there was enough to show the possibilities of the soil.

The moon was shining brightly when we approached Governor Boyd's camp, and we were greeted by a salute of lantakas (small brass cannon) so numerous that we lost all count. Datu Piang had inquired of the governor how many guns should be fired, and was told that as I held no official position he could use his own discretion as to the number. In order that he might not err on the side of too few, he fired betwen 50 and 100. We had scarcely disembarked before he came in state to make an official call, seated on the roof of his vinta, or ceremonial barge, manned by forty oarsmen. He was accompanied by his leading datus, his Mohammedan Arab adviser and his East Indian interpreter. He brought with him also his two sons and two of the sons of the late Datu Ali, who met a violent death last fall at the hands of the American troops.

I regret that we were not able to secure a photograph of him as he approached, for it was a sight of royalty such as we had not before witnessed. No language can convey the impression that he made upon us as he approached the shore, smoking a cigar and flanked on either side by a brown-skinned urchin bearing an open umbrella of red silk trimmed with wide yellow fringe. He stayed long enough to compliment the American officials and to commend Judge Powell, who happened to be with us, for treating the rich and the poor alike. Piang's sons and the younger son of Datu Ali have been learning English under the instruction of Governor Boyd's wife, and they showed remarkable progress in arithmetic as well as in the use of the language. Piang said that he wanted the boys to finish their education in the United States.

Datu Piang is not of royal blood; in fact, he is part Chinese, but he showed himself so able a financier that he became indispensable to Ali, the reigning Datu, and gave his daughter, Minka, to him in marriage. When the Americans entered the valley, Piang counselled surrender, but Ali went on the the warpath and he and his father-in-law became such bitter enemies that the latter refused to receive his daughter into his house after Ali's death, until urged to do so by the American officers.

We returned with Piang in his barge and spent a half hour in his house. In that dimly lighted upper room there gathered a dusky, half-bare crowd of men, women and children, in the center of which sat Minka, the child-widow, just recovering from the wounds which she received at the time of her husband's death. I never felt more deeply than when I looked upon them, the responsibility of our nation, or more anxious that our country should so act as to bring to these people the largest possible amount of good. One would be hard-hearted, indeed, who could see in them and in their habitation nothing but the possibility of exploitation.

When we left Piang gave a lantaka to each of the men in our party, and to some of us spears and knives in addition, while the ladies were remembered with vessels of brass of native manufacture and sarongs. If our visit had been a hostile one the cannons and weapons carried away would have made it memorable, for many expeditions have returned with less of the spoils of war.

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Our next step was at Zamboaga, the most important port on the island and the headquarters of Governor Wood. The harbor at the city is not very well protected, but there is a little bay about eight miles away which affords both deep water and shelter. We found more Americans at Zamboangan than at any point outside of Manila, nearly all of them being in the service of the government. We visiter two Moro schools here and listened to an address of welcome in English delivered by one of the students. Dr. Saleeby, an Armenian, is the superintendent of schools in Zamboanga, and has furnished a great deal of information in regard to the tradition, history and customs of the Moros. He has also prepared primers in Arabic for the Moros of Mindanao and the Sulu islands.

Our tour of the islands ended at Jolo, or rather, at Maibun, on the other side of the island. Jolo is the chief seaport of the Sulus, and the Spanish alternated with the natives in occupying the space within the walled city. A guard is still kept at the gate and the Moros are not allowed to remain within the walls at night. They enter freely during the day, but are required to leave their weapons outside the gate. There are only five Americans in Jolo, besides the government officials, two of these keep restaurants, two have saloons and the fifth has recently opened a photograph gallery.

Just outside of the city walls there is a Chinese village (as there is also at Zamboanga), the mercantile business being largely in the hands of the Chinese in both of these towns. There are a number of Christian Filipinos at both Zamboanga and Jolo.

The sultan of Sulu used to live in Jolo when the Spanish were not there, but during their occupancy of the town, and since, he has lived at Maibun, on the opposite shore, some ten miles distant. Major Stafford, who is in command of the post there, in the absence of Colonel Scott, invited the sultan to come to Jolo on the day of our arrival, and he appeared promptly on time. So much has been written of him in the United States that the readers of these articles may be interested in a description from life. He came on a pony, accompanied by a servant, who held over him a large red umbrella, and followed by a retinue of Datus, head men and small boys. A native band beat drums and tom-toms as the procession moved along. The sultan himself was dressed in modern clothes, but all the rest wore the native dress. His single-breasted, long-tailed blue broadcloth coat was buttoned to the throat with gold buttons, and his trousers were of the same material. He wore tan shoes and a fez of black and red, and carried a gold-headed ivory cane given him by the Philippine commission upon his last visit to Manila. He is small of stature, but compact in build, and carries himself with dignity and reserve. His teeth are black and he shares with his countrymen a fondness for the betel nut and tobacco. His prime minister, Haji Butu, who accompanied him, speaks more English than the sultan, though the latter is able to use a few words. After a short call we all repaired to a hall near by, where a spear dance had been arranged, and we saw the natives, men and women, go through native dances, which in some respects resemble those of the America n Indian.

The next morning we crossed the island under the protection of a troop of cavalry and returned the sultan's call. (A few miles from the trail stands a mountain where about eighty Moros still refuse allegiance to our government.) He lives in a nipa house, but has a frame building covered with galvanized iron (still unfinished) in which he receives his guests. He sent for one of his wives (of whom he has four); he has three or four concubines, he does not know which, but these are not included in the list of wives. The prime minister has four wives and two concubines, and one of the head men at whose house we stopped on the way had several wives. The sultan said that the wives were usually kept in separate houses, but that his lived together in one house.

The sultana whom we saw was dressed in silk, with trousers of red and white striped satin and wore high-heeled shoes. She has a strong face, one of the most intelligent that we saw in Sulu. Both the sultan and his wife wore diamond and pearl rings. At our request the sultan brought forth his ornaments of diamonds and pearls and exhibited his uniforms, heavy with gold braid and buttons. He is now drawing a salary of about $5,000 a year from the American government for exerting his influence in our behalf, and as a matter of economy it might be cheaper to put the Datus on the pay roll than to suppress them by force of arms. His salary, however, is probably due as much to his being the head of the church as to his fighting qualities.

We sailed from Maibun to the Bornean coast in order to take a steamer for Singapore, and as we are studying colonialism it was probably fortunate that we did, for we found a few foreigners developing north Borneo with Chinese coolies, the natives being lost sight of entirely.

At Sandakan there are thirty-eight English, two Germans and 2,000 Chinese, but we searched in vain for a native. In and about Kudat, another Bornean port, there the twenty-two Europeans and 10,000 Chinese, and here we found only a few of the original inhabitants. At Labuan there are about twenty-five foreigners, and the local business is in the hands of the Chinese and East Indians.

I refer to the plan of development adopted in those parts of Borneo at which our steamer stopped because they throw light upon the colonial question with which we have to deal. Having described briefly but as fully as space permits the conditions as I found them in the Philippines, I shall devote the next article to a discussion of the policy which should be pursued by the United States in regard to them.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

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pass diagram in the corner, and he supplemented it with the edge of the chopping board.

"Eight divisions o' that circle 'tween east an' north," he mused. "This strikes off 'bout two and a half o' them. Two an' a half divisions north o' the east line. I'll remember."

Next morning at daylight he woke to find the barge heading straight for the nest of breakers. He must do something quickly. A few moments of dazed thinking and he was himself. With some small dry rope from the cabin he lashed the forward upper corner of the sail to the foot of the mast; he could not haul it snug to its place, but made it secure. Then with the ax he chopped one of the blocks from the rail where he had left it, securing it to the same place, and, knotting one of the halyards into the after upper corner of the sail, he passed the other through this block, and leading it aft, fastened it to the dragline, not by a hitch—both ropes were icy—but by a firm lashing of small line.

Before paying out to hoist the sail he took his ax and made mighty dents in the ice which bound it. He chopped, hammered and pried until he dared wait no longer, and then he threw off the dragline turns and chopped again where most needed as the sail shook itself loose and arose with a thrashing and crackling that was deafening.

He was driven away by the hurling pieces of ice, and ran to the dragline. Taking a turn, he dubiously watched the sail ascend as he slacked out, not knowing as yet how he was to secure the lower part, until he noticed a ring worked into the edge which was just ready to slip over the side out of his reach. Making fast, he ran below, emerging with some small line and his best tackle, one block of which he hooked to this ring, lashing the hook and the other to the ringbolt in the starboard rail left vacant by the single block. Hauling taut he secured the tackle, then paying out more dragline brought the sail up.

It set beautifully, a picturesque leg-of-mutton above, but sadly blocked the deck with the unused portion below. It increased the large's speed toward the shore, and he took the wheel to throw her round. She would not come, so, lashing the halyard to the bitt with some misgivings he cut the dragline. Then she answered her helm, and soon was clawing off that leeshore as bravely as though carrying a complete equipment of spars, sails and able seamen.

He found the course he had selected and held her to it, not steering true, but very well for a novice, watching all the time for ports on the south shore. He saw no signs that his judgment approved of, however, and he resolved to go on; he could not miss Buffalo.

Darkness descended, and he steered by compass alone, as the wind freshened to a gale, and by midnight to a hurricane that at times flattened the seas to a level. His lame side ached; his blind eye, inflamed with cold, smarted as though torn with needles; but he bravely made his course good. The seas poured over and drenched him, and ice formed on his back and shoulders, descending as a curtain from the rim of his sou'wester. Working the wheel made his arm and breast perspire, while his feet smarted, burned and grew numb as the water in his boots congealed. All but engulfed in a liquid world, he felt the torture of thirst until he bit ice from his sleeve. He talked to and about himself.

A sleepy life saver patrolling the beach saw a curious craft approaching port in the gray of the morning, making wild, zigzag yaws as though undecided which shore to strike. He awakened his comrades and then the nearest tug captain, and having nothing better to do and with plenty of time, turned out all the tugs moored on his side of the river. Six puffing, snorting, high-pressure tugs ranged up alongside of the shapeless iceberg floundering into port, their captains roaring out requests for a line to the disheveled creature at the wheel. A vacant stare and a backward wave of the arm were the only answer.

Gayly and noisily the procession passed up Buffalo river, and it was only after the leading craft had torn three vessels from their moorings, after passing the foot of Main street, black with cheering men, and through the bridge, barely swung in time to save it, that the tugmen managed to get aboard and take lines. The barge was stopped just in time to save a canal boat that lay in her way from a fatal rmming.

She was moored to the dock, and crowds poured aboard and passed comments. And her helmsman and navigator—where was he? In the galley, lighting a fire; he had earned his breakfast and wanted it. Newspaper men sought him and asked questions, which he answered between mouthfuls mainly by a simple "Dunno." One brought him a looking-glass, into which he looked wonderingly; his lips were shrunken and drawn, his face wrinkled, and his hair, which had been dark, was white as the crests of the seas he had conquered.

The captain of a windbound liner appeared and interviewed him. "He's not a sailor" he reported later, "but he has accomplished the greatest feat of pure seamanship I ever heard of. Yes, sir, it's wonderful; but it's possible. And it's a salvage job, too; he'll get several thousand dollars."

But, though every reporter on every paper in Buffalo hunted for him high and low, he did not put in a claim for salvage.

That night a southbound freight train carried a wrinkled, white-haired, one-eyed "tramp," bound for sunnier climes, where ice and snow were unknown.